



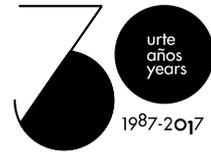
**GIJTR**

Global Initiative for Justice,  
Truth & Reconciliation



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# CURRICULUM REFORM AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Written by Gernika Gogoratuz

Title: Transitional Justice and Curriculum Reform Case Study – Euskadi and Colombia

## 1. Introduction and Background

### 1.1. Description of the research process for case studies: Euskadi and Colombia

Gernika Gogoratuz (GGG), is a Peace Research Center created in 1987, whose mission is to be a reference place in peace research and action, contributing to generating changes and social transformation in the development of a peace culture through research, training, community intervention, outreach and strengthening of work networks.

This report gathers together the accumulated experience of GGG in the educational processes for the construction of peace carried out, both by the Center and by the collaborating entities, in their career in the Basque Country and in Colombia. In general, the knowledge generated in the framework of international research was resumed “*Under evaluation: Social Studies Teachers’ Understanding and Ethical Discussion of Political Violence and Nonviolence*”, in the Basque Country, Colombia and the United States, developed by the Conflict and Cultures of Peace line of the Center for Applied Ethics of the University of Deusto (CEA), between September 2012 and August 2016.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of Euskadi, the social dialogue initiatives promoted by GGG were taken into account, “*Memorialab: Encuentros ciudadanos para la construcción social de la memoria [Citizen meetings for the social construction of memory]*” and “*Afaloste. Convivencia al pil-pil [Pil-pil interaction]: Laboratorio gastronómico social [Social gastronomic laboratory]*”; as well as, the work performed by CEA around a *Learning Community* with young people to explore their questions and reflections on the politically motivated violence experienced in the Euskadi in recent decades. In the case of Colombia, two initiatives were considered. On the one hand, the work undertaken by the GGG partner entity, Fundación Escuelas de Paz en Colombia [Peace Schools Foundation in Colombia], and, on the other hand, the pedagogical materials *Un viaje por la memoria histórica [A journey through historical memory]* - Aprender la paz y desaprender la guerra [*Learning peace and unlearning war*] (2018) prepared by the pedagogical team of the National Center of Historical Memory (*Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, CNMH*). The basis for this research was provided by the doctoral research thesis *Enseñanza de la historia reciente en Colombia: retos y oportunidades de la educación para la paz en la escuela [Teaching recent history in Colombia: challenges and opportunities for peace education in schools.]*<sup>2</sup> developed within the CEA. As an in-depth study, 6 interviews were conducted, as summarized in the table below.

<sup>1</sup> Research led by Ángela Bermúdez within the framework of Marie Curie Actions: FP7-PEOPLE-2012-CIG.

<sup>2</sup> Thesis defended by the investigator Angélica Padilla Méndez in June 2018.



<b>Education for peace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ángela Bermúdez: director of the CEA Conflict and Peace Cultures Research Line</li> </ul>
<b>Basque Country</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jesús Prieto: researcher associated with the CEA, participant in the Learning Community and co-author of the notebooks on memory, historical education and peace building.</li> <li>▪ Iratxe Momoitio: director of the Gernika Peace Museum</li> </ul>
<b>Colombia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amada Benavides: President of the Fundación Escuelas de Paz [Peace Schools Foundation] in Colombia</li> <li>▪ Alejandra Londoño: member of the CNMH pedagogy team in Colombia</li> <li>▪ Diana Velásquez: consultant on peace education issues for the Colombian Ministry of National Education (<i>Ministerio de Educación Nacional, MEN</i>).</li> </ul>

## 1.2. Brief description of the specific history of conflict, repression and violence

Despite its social, cultural, economic and political differences, the Basque Country and Colombia are currently in a transitional period where they have not yet resolved the traumatic past of the violence that occurred in their recent history.

Euskadi has suffered decades of violence due to political motivation. After a coup d'état against the legitimate government of the II Republic, the Spanish Civil War began (1936-1939) that gave way to 40 years of Franco dictatorship. In the 1960s, ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna) was born, followed by other terrorist groups (ATE -Antiterrorism ETA-, Spanish Basque Battalion -BVE-, GAL -Antiterrorist Liberation Groups-). In recent decades, the multiple and ongoing violations of Human Rights by diverse actors: armed groups, *Kale Borroka*, the State security forces, have left thousands of victims: murders, attacks on physical and psychological integrity, kidnappings, attacks on people and property, economic extortion, fires, intimidation, torture and crimes against freedom, etc.

For years, coexistence has been profoundly altered by factors such as polarized attitudes, the justification of violence, the unfocused reading of Human Rights (their fulfillment is only demanded when it affects one group and not another), the lack of empathy towards those who think and live differently, the attitude of forgetting the violations committed, the narratives that exclude the plural voices of a diverse citizenry, silences and/or fear, lack of freedom to express opinions openly, discrimination, attitudes of rejection and prejudice towards those who think differently, dehumanizing the "other" to the point of turning him/her into an enemy, frivolization and mockery of the victims, false accusations and criminalization of different identity, cultural, social or linguistic expressions.

There have been multiple aspects of organizational life that have been seriously conditioned and affected by the violent context: illegalized and prosecuted political parties and various social and cultural agents; members of threatened political parties, pursued, silenced and murdered; the education sector is reduced and conditioned by political violence with threatened teachers and police escorts, a questionable school model, politicization of Basque and cultural life and possible social and/or criminal consequences.

The cessation of the violent activity of ETA (2011) and its self-dissolution (2018) opened a new scenario in which to continue working to understand the impact that Human Rights violations have had on coexistence, and to promote processes of democratic memory, defense of rights and education for peace.

For its part, Colombia has experienced more than sixty years of armed conflict in its recent history. Towards the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after a legacy of bipartisan political violence, armed groups of peasant self-defense groups were formed that were the niche of the guerrilla organizations. In 1964, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC) emerged declaring a military offense against the State and initiating the so-called Armed Conflict. Since then and from different regions of the country, other left-wing groups, including the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN), the Popular Liberation Army (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*, EPL) and the April 19 (M19) Movement, have joined this struggle.

Towards the eighties, after several years of armed confrontations between the Armed Forces and the guerrillas, self-defense groups were formed to defend the interests of the terrains extorted by the guerrillas. These groups climbed into power and came together under the umbrella of the United Self-Defenses of Colombia (AUC). They are paramilitary groups on the right that, in alliance with drug traffickers and with the support of some sectors of the Armed Forces, faced a dirty war against insurgency in several areas of the country. Despite the demobilization of AUCs in 2006, their political and economic structures were maintained, resulting in the re-arming and formation of groups called Criminal Bands (*Bandas Criminales*, BACRIM) or Neo Paramilitary groups, fundamentally gravitating around the illegal drug business. Some guerrilla fronts were also linked to drug trafficking, thus contributing to a greater degradation of the conflict. This is how, starting in the 1980s, the Colombian armed conflict presents itself as a confrontation between the guerrillas, the paramilitaries and the Armed Forces, for controlling the territory, access to legal and illegal resources and controlling local political processes.

After four and a half years of dialogues between the government and the FARC-EP, in November 2016 the final agreement was signed for the end of the conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace with this guerrilla group. Five years later, the implementation of what was agreed upon has been slow and the violence persists. Since the signing of the agreement, more than 250 former guerrillas and more than 1000 social leaders have been murdered throughout the country. Several illegal armed actors are still operating, such as self-defense groups that are returning to the territories previously controlled by the FARC-EP; the ELN; the appearance of dissidences of the former guerrillas, including the arrival of Mexican cartels, thus prolonging the conflict around the economies of war.

### 1.3. The education system and the school curriculum before reconciliation-oriented reforms

In both countries, the educational system and the school curriculum contemplated education strategies for peace.

In Spain, the State assumes the competence of approving basic educational regulations, but it is the autonomous system of territorial organization that is responsible for developing and completing said regulations and managing the system in its community. As regards teaching the recent history of political violence in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, the educational curriculum offered materials and programming to address the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), but not the recent history of the Basque conflict.

In December 2007, the Basque Government's Directorate of Human Rights published *the Basque Education Plan for Peace and Human Rights (2008 – 2011)*. There, a double strategy is proposed: a general program that seeks to develop a fundamental ethics in education *and for* Human Rights; and another, more specific, program that discredits the culture of violence and its internalization

as a supposedly legitimate way of achieving political objectives. In 2010, the Basque Parliament approved the *Plan for Democratic Coexistence and Dislegitimation of Violence*, with the objective of strengthening the moral and civic fabric of the community, deteriorated by violence of political intention, through education. The Plan included the Educational Victims Program that contemplated the presence and testimony of victims of terrorist violence in the development of the corresponding educational program, as a resource that would be used with educational and plurality criteria. Later, the Peace and Coexistence *Plan (2013-2016)* was published, which, after the cessation of the armed ETA activity in 2011, had as objectives “to contribute to the definitive and irreversible consolidation of peace and to promote the improvement of social and political awareness, damaged by a traumatic and sustained experience of terrorism, violence and human rights violations.”

For its part, in Colombia, by constitutional mandate, education must train the student body in respecting Human Rights, peace and democracy. The General Education Law of 1994 states in Articles 5 and 14 that education in general aims to provide training on respect for Human Rights, especially life, peace, democracy, coexistence, pluralism and the exercise of tolerance and freedom. Decree 1860 regulates the pedagogical and organizational aspects to comply with the Law, through the creation of transversal pedagogical projects in subjects of environmental education, education for sexuality and Human Rights that each institution must design and implement according to the needs of its own context.

On the other hand, in 2006, the MEN created the Basic Standards in Language, Mathematics, Science and Citizen Skills. The latter include the development of communication, cognitive, emotional and integrated competences in order to promote the training of citizens capable of living in peace, participating in the construction of public matters, demanding and protecting their rights, and respecting those of others. In 2009, the MEN, the Ombudsman’s Office and the Presidential Council for Human Rights created the National Human Rights Education Plan, known as PLANEDH, with the aim of incorporating and consolidating the training of active subjects of rights that contribute to the consolidation of a social rule of law, multiethnic and pluricultural, and the construction of a culture of rights in the country. Then, in 2015, Law 1732 was regulated, which includes the Chair for Peace as a compulsory course in all educational institutions in the country. The aim of this Chair is to create and consolidate a space for learning, reflection and dialogue on the culture of peace and sustainable development that contributes to the general well-being and improvement of the quality of life of the population.

#### 1.4. Reconciliation Paths and Processes

The reconciliation experiences and initiatives in both cases progress according to the particularities of each territory and its history of violence; with different speeds and formats. Both have the task of facing the horrors of the past, including the present, and moving towards the construction of really reconciled societies. The path they have to travel is still long, but there are steps and routes that have begun to be traveled.

After 59 years of existence and several formal and informal attempts to negotiate, on October 20, 2011 ETA announced in a communiqué “the definitive cessation of its armed activity.” Years later, on March 17, 2017, it announced its definitive dismantling unilaterally and without conditions. In this final, it is worth highlighting the role that Basque civil society played in the configuration of peace in the Euskadi. They are to mention initiatives such as Gesto por la Paz [Peace Gesture], which emerged in 1986 and Elkarrri, which started in 1992 and later became Lokarri in 2006. Both movements dissolve after the armed cessation of ETA, in 2013 and 2014, respectively. The axis of action revolved around the claim of non-violence, the promotion of

citizen mobilization and those called to understanding and dialogue (Arrieta & Landaberea, 2019). It is also worth highlighting the Forum for Educational Associations in Human Rights and for Peace that was established in 2007, currently called Eskubidez, with 25 member associations that contribute to the consolidation of a culture of peace.

In recent years, progress has been made incipiently in reconciliation processes, more than from a criminal point of view from a restorative justice system. In this field, three experiences can be highlighted: restorative meetings between victims and convicted of ETA terrorism crimes that took place within the so-called Nanclares road during the year 2011; meetings between victims of terrorist groups of different political motivation that took place within the *Glencree* Initiative; and the educational victims program mentioned above (Intxaurbe, 2019).

For its part, Colombia has been involved in an armed confrontation for more than 60 years, 20 of them trying to end the conflict through negotiated channels. The most recent effort resulted in the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP in 2016 within the framework of which a whole legal, political and institutional scaffolding of transnational justice was launched.

Taking as background the Justice and Peace Act (975 of 2005), emanating from the process with the paramilitaries, a Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition (*Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y No Repetición, SIVJRNR*) was designed that proposes the integrality of transitional justice to lay the foundations of coexistence and reconciliation in the country. The system consists of several entities: the Unit for Searching for Persons Given as Disappeared; the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition (CEV); and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

The reconciliation experiences *from below* are also broad and old data. The Colombian civil society, organized and not so much, has an accumulated work in terms of peace building. Since the 1980s, social mobilization for peace has been active, which, in the midst and despite violence, has been strengthening itself until it takes on a leading role as “promoters” of peace and more recently as “supporters” of the Peace Agreement. There are multiple reconciliation experiences with and from the bases: campaigns for peace and coexistence, regional dialogues and mediation instances with illegal armed actors, social mobilizations, indigenous mingas, reports of the truth from the voice of women, from ethnic groups, from the territories; meetings between victims and victims, etc.

## 2. Reforms and Innovations

### 2.1. Government initiatives

#### Basque Country

In terms of public policy in 2017, the Basque Government approved the *Plan for Coexistence and Human Rights 2017-2020. An objective of social gathering, the option of empathy*. This Plan was the basis for the design of public policy in the field of coexistence and Human Rights. After five years since the announcement of the abandonment of ETA weapons, its objectives show the political will to close wounds from the past, resolve pending problems in the present and consolidate a culture of normalized coexistence with memory.

More recently, in September 2021, the Basque Government publishes *Udaberri 2024 - Plan for Coexistence, Human Rights and Diversity*. Udaberri in Basque means springtime, and symbolizes

the spirit of this Plan, which suggests that, after a long winter of political violence, the new season must be based on memory, truth and self-criticism by those who have exercised violence. The Plan includes a critical reflection on the past based on an inclusive, open and empathetic memory; focused on victims, sensitive, critical and ethical.

More specifically and with regard to the curricular reform, as a result of the collaboration between Gogora - Institute of Memory, Coexistence and Human Rights -; the General Secretariat of Human Rights, Coexistence and Cooperation; and the Department of Education of the Basque Government; the Basque Government published in October 2018 the

*Herenegun! materials and Terrorism in Spain.* A series of pedagogical orientations that address the period of ETA from a double perspective: on the one hand, the history of ETA; and on the other, the evolution of the Basque socio-political context. The educational program, which currently has a third edition, consists of five documentaries organized by decades, from 1960 to 2011 and four notebooks with work plans for both teachers and students. The purpose of the *Herenegun! teaching unit* is to insert the period corresponding to what is known as Recent Memory (1960-2018) in the curriculum of 4<sup>th</sup> Geography and History courses of DBH-ESO. *The Terrorism* units in Spain aim to raise awareness of the tragic consequences of terrorism, encouraging its rejection and delegitimation with geography and history students of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of secondary school and the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of high school.

## Colombia

With regard to public policy, after the signing of the peace agreements, in December 2017, Law 1874 was sanctioned, which partially modifies the General Education Law (115/1994), reestablishing the mandatory teaching of Colombia's History as a discipline integrated into the curricular guidelines of social sciences. This Law aims to contribute to the formation of a national identity that recognizes ethnic and cultural diversity; to develop critical thinking through understanding the country's historical processes, and to promote the formation of a historical memory that contributes to reconciliation and peace.

With regard to educational materials, in 2016 the MEN published the Proposal for *Performances and Educational Sequences for Peace* to be enriched by Colombian teachers. These are orientations that illustrate how a curricular design could be for the implementation of the Chair of Peace. *The Performances* include the objectives and skills that are intended to be developed in the students for each school grade, as well as educational recommendations for teachers. It focuses on socio-emotional development, peaceful resolution of social conflicts, peaceful coexistence and the prevention of school harassment. In the last two grades of high school, three sessions to study are assigned: i) the forms of leadership in events that marked the history of Colombia; ii) identity, prejudices and stereotypes in the period of violence (1948-1974); iii) the role of the actors in the conflict and peace-building strategies (1974 and 1991); iv) and the exercise of Human Rights, identity and citizen participation in accordance with the Constitution, in the context of the armed conflict.

## 2.2. Informal educational initiatives

While there are several informal educational initiatives that aim to contribute with pedagogical methodologies and strategies to education for overcoming violence and building peace, GGG has selected the initiatives we consider to have fundamental elements for this purpose.

## Basque Country



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### 2.2.1. *Memorialab and Ashaloste*

Thanks to the alliance between three Basque organizations such as Gernika Gogoratuz, the Gernika Peace Museum Foundation and Bakeola Coexistence, conflict and human rights, *Memorialab, Barnetegj - laboratorio ciudadano en torno a la memoria social* [a citizen laboratory around social memory] was born in 2013. This is a social memory construction initiative through meetings of people who, from different places and ideologies, have been affected by the violence of political motivation experienced during the last decades in the Euskadi. Its objective is to promote a teaching of peace, and to educate in the knowledge, respect and promotion of human dignity and Human Rights, through both self-reflection and dialogue with other people, to recognize and dimension the personal relationship with conflict, violence and its personal and social implications (Retolaza, Momoitio, Salazar, & Oianguren, 2019). This initiative has been carried out in different Basque towns and cities where people with different political sensibility have been able to talk about their recent memories in a protected, relaxed and respectful environment.

*Memorialab's* theoretical and methodological premises seek to generate a reflection and transformative experience by those who attend and participate in the meetings. From a complex systemic viewpoint, diverse groups are formed with whom objective facts (events of conflict) are worked on to explore emotions, associations with the past, traumas, feelings or fears. This work allows for the expression, in the face of a collective gaze, of interconnections of various stories, interpretations and experiences. In this way, the systemic relationship between past and present events can be seen. On the other hand, and based on the definition of an ethical framework, people are invited to express, share and question their own definitions, experiences and “truths” regarding how they remember and understand the past experienced. Three questions related to temporality are asked: What happened? (history and memory) What have we noticed? (emerging learning and updating) and How can we use this learning in the future? (integration and prospective gaze). It seeks to create a space where all voices can be heard, giving each one a place, value and relevance when explaining a part of reality. It is based on these stories that a collective interrelationship and a social construction of the memory can be established.

*Memorialab* combines cognitive learning with body learning. From different methodological disciplines such as the circle of testimonies, *storytelling*, U Theory, Work on Processes, body work, art and creativity or democratic dialogue, an integration of the belief system and the patterns of body relationship at the intra and interpersonal and social level is made, achieving a transformative experience. In order for this process to take place, it is essential that people feel safe and comfortable to be able to openly, calmly and confidentially share their experience of conflict and violence. Hence, these meetings are held in places that invite introspection.

Likewise, *Memorialab* explores past – present – future relationships to become aware of how the past that could have been silenced and forgotten out of fear, indifference or shame, affects the configuration of current identity, both individual and collective, and projects the future. To this end, three dimensions of reality are managed: agreed, sleepy and essential. The first refers to the objective reality; the second is (inter) subjective and refers to how each person experiences or experiences the objective; and the third refers to a transpersonal dimension where it is possible to connect with pain and other people's experience. In the latter, motivation and agency can emerge towards collective improvement.

Finally, another valuable element of this initiative is the management of the symbolic through artistic expression, which allows us to represent, through other non-verbal forms, the complexity of the memories and feelings associated with violence and its personal and social implications.

“*Afaloste*” is an adaptation of the previous one in the form of a gastronomic-social laboratory where a diverse and intergenerational group of people gather around a txoko or gastronomic association, eat and talk about their personal experiences around violence of political motivation suffered for decades. It differs from Memorialab in that it is shorter and makes use of a space closer and more everyday to people (Retolaza, Momotio, Salazar, & Oianguren, 2020). Developing difficult conversations around the meal facilitates dialogue, makes it friendlier and more relaxed, and increases the feeling of trust and safety of the participants.

### 2.2.2. *Learning Community*

Following the dissolution of ETA, the CEA and the Euskadi Youth Council (EGK) have carried out studies and promoted various initiatives to reflect on how the new generations understand and make sense of the violence of the Basque conflict. Between October 2019 and June 2020, the two entities created a learning community, with young people between the ages of 17 and 25, with the objective of triggering an open, critical and reflective dialogue on the memory and history of the Basque conflict and the violence of political motivation experienced in the Euskadi in recent decades. It also sought to delve into the best way to teach recent history to new generations and propose proposals taking into account their experiences of formal learning.

Based on the question, *what do you want to know about the violence experienced in the Euskadi and don't dare to ask?* The young people shared their imaginations, beliefs, positions and doubts, favoring a critical review of their personal and collective memories. The methodology used is intergenerational dialogical between students and teachers in which there are no clearly established social consensuses and in which it is necessary to put into dialogue the knowledge and needs of different actors.

This is how, in these meetings, individual and collective memories were shared, which were contrasted with the knowledge of historical discipline. Afterwards, she was invited to young people who were given feedback on the educational proposal. To ensure the necessary conditions for honest, fluid and constructive dialogue, in the initial phase of the process, basic rules for participation were collectively defined. These include taking care of non-verbal communication, not judging or allowing oneself to change his/her mind.

On this basis, the sessions were developed in three different phases:

The first phase was aimed at exploring the personal and collective memories of the participants, generating reflections on their weight in the construction and negotiation of identities. Fragments of personal memories were collected, contrasted with collective memories and organized in a timeline.

In the second phase, the participants were confronted with the testimony of a victim of violence of political motivation in the Euskadi, the importance of respect for human dignity was highlighted, and it was reflected on how the voices and perspectives of the victims contribute a fundamental element for the delegitimization of violence.

In the third and final phases, ideas and activities were proposed to reflect critically on the historical context in which the personal and collective memories of the Basque conflict and violence are framed. During this phase, various activities were carried out that sought to historicize memory by questioning personal and collective memories from some central categories of historical thinking.

With regard to this experience, young people positively valued having found a safe space where they could speak freely about controversial issues marked socially by silence. They also valued the methodologies, diversity of the group, the willingness to dialogue and the listening that was generated from the agreements established in the initial phase. They declared, in turn, having taken a reflective distance from their own imaginaries and beliefs associated with conflict and the use of violence (Sáez de la Fuente, Bermudez & Prieto, 2020).

Following the systematization of this experience, three books were published on Memory, Historical Education and Peace Building that includes a theoretical approach to the contributions of historical education to the delegitimization of political violence; the balance of the learning community's experience and specific educational orientation and resources.

## Colombia

### 2.2.3. *La Caja de Herramientas [The Toolbox]. Un viaje por la memoria histórica: aprender la paz y desaprender la guerra [A journey through historic memory: learning peace and unlearning war]*

The Law on Victims and Land Restitution 1448 of Colombia provides for the creation of the CNMH, which aims to gather and recover all documentary and testimonial material from the facts that led to violations of victims' rights within the framework of the Colombian armed conflict. In 2015, the Center's educational team published the following educational material: The Toolbox, a set of resources, texts, routes, pedagogical sequences and activities to study and discuss different aspects of the armed conflict in the school environment from a pluralist, historically rigorous perspective, with a differential focus and action without damage (CNMH, 2015).

This educational material includes resources for both teachers and students in the last grades of high school, and seeks to generate critical reflections on the causes, actors, interests and consequences of the Colombian armed conflict, giving the victims a leading role.

The proposed Pedagogical route is of an inductive nature. It starts from the daily experiences of teachers and students to open a place for emotions and, in this way, articulate the questions of identity and the recognition of who we are, with the work of contrasting sources typical of the rigor of historical education.

The Fund seeks to transfer, in a pedagogical manner, the reports produced by the Center to the school. Through the activities proposed by teachers in different territories, tools and texts, it is sought to open up conversations with children and adolescents to understand the dynamics of the armed conflict. Currently, the Toolbox has three editions and consists of several books containing:

- A conceptual development on the relationships between personal, collective and historical memories, and the way in which they promote an innovative approach to the teaching of history, citizenship and democracy.
- A route to work in the school, the historical memory with tools to undertake projects for the recovery of historical memory in the different territories.
- The vision and conceptualization of the importance of working on historical memory in the key to peace in the school, carried out by teachers from different territories of the country, as well as a compilation of activities that show the innovative and creative ways through which they have interpreted, developed and adapted the Pedagogical Route.
- Textbooks for students in the last grades of high school, with their respective guides for teachers, inspired by the emblematic cases published by the Historical Memory Group.



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The work from each of these cases allows us to know what happened in these territories and to work on phenomena and gears in the dynamics of the armed conflict in the country.

- A four-tool compendium for understanding the dynamics of the armed conflict in Colombia: The first, for the analysis of contexts, analysis and interpretation of the environments themselves. The second, to understand the statistical records of the armed conflict. The third, for the analysis of the impacts of political violence in relation to gender identity, ethnicity, race, age and cultural traditions.
- A document that allows recognition of the initiatives for the memories and resistance of the victims of the conflict.

After the change of government in 2018, there was a change in the direction and teams of the CNMH and the dissemination of these pedagogical materials was slowed down. In educational terms, the Government concentrated efforts in the processes of fostering and developing citizen competencies from an approximation of education for peace based on values and building interpersonal relationships for positive coexistence.

#### *2.2.4. The school as a space for building memory and truth. Cases of resistance in educational institutions in Belén, Curillo, Milan and Montañita, Department of Caquetá*

The Peace Schools Foundation is a non-profit organization formed with the aim of contributing to the construction of peace in Colombia, based on the development of actions that favor the organization, participation and empowerment of educational communities and other leaderships. Develops actions in coordination with core groups at the local level and within the framework of the approaches of: Human Rights, gender, intersectionality and interculturality.

In conjunction with the CEV, between October 2020 and May 2021, the Foundation developed the project for the construction of memory and truth in the department of Caquetá with the objective of contributing to the purposes of the CEV through a research contribution from the place of the school, its direct actors and the educational community of which it is a part. The project was carried out in rural schools in four municipalities in the north and south of Caquetá, an area strongly affected by the violence of the armed conflict. The objective was to delve into the impressions, memories and memories of the recent past linked to violence of political motivation, as well as the proposals and alternatives that these communities could build to survive in conditions of extreme violence and insecurity.

Each educational institution formed a group of community researchers (one teacher, one teaching director, one member of the Community<sup>3</sup> Action Board of each municipality and two students). These researchers received training and support to be able to guide and lead the process of memory recovery with the educational community (teachers, teaching directors, students, and parents). In this way, the school worked in an articulated manner with people in its community, promoting dialogue, exchange and connection with the environment.

The collection of information that would show how the violence affected the municipality and the school was based on key questions related to the way the war was experienced in the territory, how the conflict was experienced, the processes of resistance, the effects on women and the practices and ideas to build peace.

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<sup>3</sup> Social, civic and community organizations of a solidarity nature that are formed to solve the problems of the community.

To obtain this information, social cartography, timelines, memory circles, interviews, photographic records and drawings, among others, were performed. Each group systematized the information collected and made a short video and another product (songs, murals...) chosen by each school to socialize the work done in the workshops. Subsequently, meetings were held between groups of community researchers and the community, authorities and other organizations to socialize the work carried out. It is worth highlighting the articulated work of this process, since the young people had different narratives and perceptions about the acts of violence that occurred in their territory, which were able to fit and articulate to have a broader understanding and better understand their place in the community.

It is important to highlight the context of difficulty in which this work was carried out and the obstacles faced by these communities when developing participatory processes for memory recovery and peace building. In the development of the project, it was possible to identify that new forms of intimidation by armed groups are affecting educational communities. This generates prevention and resistance when it comes to joining and participating in activities such as those proposed in this project. Likewise, both the pandemic and the national strike, which began at the end of April, limited in-person activities and field visits. Even so, the participants valued the process positively, as for many it was the first time they expressed experiences in the context of the armed conflict.

### 3. Reflections, Lessons and Recommendations

Based on the experiences gathered, below, we present three major challenges for the implementation of pedagogical processes for the delegitimization of politically intentional violence and social commitment to non-repetition, as well as strategies for its improvement and recommendations for its implementation in the formal educational sector.

#### 3.1. Challenges

- **Overcoming bias and silence after political violence in recent history**

The approach to violent and conflictive events in recent history poses challenges different from those of teaching events that are farther in time. According to Carretero (2017), in contexts that have gone through periods of political violence in their recent history, as is the case of the Basque Country and Colombia, this approach is complex since the limit between the past and the present becomes diffuse, and the processes for the review and change of beliefs leading to reconciliation must confront narratives loaded with subjectivities that circulate in the contexts of the development of young people. Many times, since the wounds of the past are still open, youth find themselves with avoidant silence and distorted stories that guide their approach to recent history.

In both cases of study, it was observed that the use of political violence has polarized society and has generated dynamics in which many times people deliberately decide not to talk about political positions and opinions to avoid labeling or confrontations. Both subjectivity and silence, in both cases, have been transferred to school.

According to Bermudez, Sáez de la Fuente and Bilbao (2020) in the Basque Country, this could be due to the lack of social and political consensus in the explanation and interpretation of the conflict, which have been considered fundamental to be able to address the issue at school. Likewise, “passing the page” and “saving silence” has been used as mechanisms to maintain peace. In the case of Colombia, according to Padilla (2018), the confluence of positions and victimizations, both in students and in teachers, makes the subject very sensitive. In addition, a

“culture of silence” has been established in the territories, in which it is considered risky to express any opinion on the armed conflict and its actors.

- **Design and dissemination of educational materials that promote a critical approach to recent history**

Even when governments are taking important steps towards the design of educational materials that allow the recent history of political violence in the classrooms to work, in both cases it is possible to observe that the narratives of these materials can hinder the delegitimization of violence.

In the Basque Country, with the review of the *Herenegun!* materials, it is observed that its educational approach emphasizes education in values and feelings, and not in historical education. That is to say, its intention is to promote the education of feelings related to empathy and compassion in the face of hatred or vengeance, and not the deepening and reasoning of a historical nature. Although some research exercises are included, the majority are marked by the interpretation of the victims’ testimonies. This limits the possibility of promoting a critical understanding of the past that implies a thorough reading of the sources, the analysis of evidence, the

contextualization and causal reconstruction, the contrast of perspectives or the identification of change and continuity processes (Pena, Bermudez, Sáez de la Fuente, Izaskun, Bilbao, & Prieto, 2020).

In Colombia, the issue of armed conflict is based on textbooks from different publishers. An analysis of the narrative of those with the broadest dissemination in the country made it possible to determine that their structure focused on government actions, their simple causal explanation and the absence of the perspective of the victims make it difficult to promote a critical understanding of the Colombian armed conflict (Padilla & Bermudez, 2016). With regard to the Orientations *Proposed Performances and Didactic Sequences of Education for Peace*, it seems important to note that these are orientations that are more focused on socio-emotional education for the prevention of school harassment than on a strategy that allows the violence used in the context of the armed conflict to be delegitimized.

- **Overcome the gap between public educational policy and pedagogical practice in the classroom**

While, in both cases of study, a public educational policy is observed that contemplates peace education processes aimed at the delegitimization of violence, in the reality of the classrooms, educational practices based on memorization and vertical relations between teachers and students continue to be developed. Both in the Basque Country and in Colombia, as this is a sensitive issue that can locate teachers in a difficult social situation in their community, the option that has been favored is to comply with the general requirements of educational laws and work on topics of peace and coexistence in a transversal and indirect manner. This is how the references that are usually worked on in the classroom related to political violence in recent history are made in a simple and simple manner, and are based on narratives of school texts that do not favor a critical approach to the use of violence and its implications. In the case of Colombia, the presence of armed actors in the communities in conflict zones places the teachers in a situation of risk that limits their practices and narratives in the classroom.

On the other hand, the study of recent history has been biased by partisan interests that can give greater or lesser viability to these initiatives. In the case of the Basque Country, it can be observed that the different narratives that account for recent history are found with strong resistances in the political field, either by the representation of the voices of the victims of violence of political motivation, the emphasis on certain facts and the explanations that are given regarding the actions of the actors involved in the conflict. In Colombia, the change of government slowed the dissemination of the CNMH Toolbox, the greatest advancement in educational materials to address the armed conflict in the classroom. The number of schools that have these materials is very low and after the signing of the peace agreement, care focused on the promotion and development of socio-emotional competencies (A.Londoño, interview on September 24, 2021).

### 3.2. Strategies

#### ▪ **Orchestration between memory and historical education**

In relation to biases and social silence installed, memory recovery is a valuable strategy for educational processes aimed at the delegitimization of violence. Memory is the connection that people have with the past, it provides the history of emotional and identity-based components, it is a source of diversity of discourses and perspectives, and it has the enormous potential to include the voice of people and groups that can be excluded from dominant narratives. In this regard, we highlight initiatives such as *Memorialab and Afaloste*, as they are meeting points for personal memories to reestablish trust and encourage people's willingness to speak, listen and understand the position of others. These dialogical spaces/methodologies are an important starting point as they allow for the restoration of the social fabric, which is fundamental in transitional justice processes.

However, even though the memories and voices of the victims open the way to reconciliation, they favor the dislegitimation and non-repetition of past violations, they do not constitute a source to guide the understanding of history (Carretero, Rosa & González, 2006). In this sense, we consider it fundamental to articulate this work with a historical education that serves as a reference framework to locate these voices in a specific social, economic and political context. The story is analytical and intellectual, a discipline that seeks to approach the past through a rigorous review based on evidence. Therefore, an articulation between memory and history favors that memory is eliminated from emotivism, subjectivism and partiality (Bermudez et al., 2020)

#### ▪ **Integration of voices and perspectives of victims into historical education**

Likewise, and from an ethical and moral perspective, the voices of the victims in the approximation of recent history favor the rejection of any argument that denies respect for life or freedom. Integrating the experience of victims and giving them a central place in pedagogical processes aimed at the delegitimization of political violence allows for an approach to the past that exceeds the parameters of rational reflection; it allows for a better understanding of the injustice of violence, as well as a closer representation of the damage caused (Bilbao & Etxeberria, 2005).

In the text that contains the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the CNMH Tool Fund, and from its implementation in different territories in Colombia, it is suggested that the testimonies of the victims have a transformative power in that they inspire solidarity and provoke indignation among the young people in the suffering suffered by others. They point out that this is a way to delegitimize the use of violence from the daily and specific experiences of those who suffered various violations. It is important to point out the importance of presenting these voices and

perspectives in an inspiring way; in this sense, the Fund emphasizes the processes of agency, resistance and memory that the victims have undertaken, with a view to visualizing and recognizing their strength, highlighting inspiring and courageous stories of thousands of people who constantly fight to overcome themselves and so that the violence that marked their lives is not repeated.

- **Transformation of the narratives that normalize and legitimize violence**

With respect to historical education, it is important to bear in mind that both narratives and methodologies used can perpetuate stereotypes, imaginaries and ideas that support and justify the use of violence. Likewise, and when they are done in an encyclopedic and memoristic manner, they can normalize violence. But also, and when done in a rigorous manner, they can contribute to develop a critical understanding of the past and an open and dialogic disposition of citizens to face social conflicts in alternative, constructive and proactive ways. (Bermudez, 2021).

After an investigation that analyzed different educational materials that narrated episodes marked by violence, Bermudez identified 10 recurring patterns or narrative keys that normalize violence in the narratives of school materials that account for the violent past. The author proposes to avoid these biases and to do the opposite. In this sense, it recommends generating reflections that allow (1) distinguishing conflict from violence and presenting the latter as a deliberate option when facing conflict; (2) not justifying violence as an unfortunate but necessary means to achieve valuable social ends, such as achieving progress, gaining independence or building a nation; (3) including different narratives and perspectives that allow for a deeper understanding of the conflict and its causes; (4) give a place to the voices of victims in order to achieve a dimension of the magnitude of the damage of violence; (5) discuss the social structures that generate and sustain violence; (6) reflect on the human agency behind violence; (7) present attention to and study nonviolent alternatives; (8) generate reflections on the costs at different levels of the use of violence; and finally (10) favor connections between the past, the present, the future and the social self (2016; 2019).

### 3.3. Recommendations

In order for the strategies described above to be developed in the school context, the confluence of different elements is required:

- **Curricular policies that favor the orchestration of memory and history**

To give a place in the curriculum to these approaches, clear and precise educational policies are necessary that make explicit the relationship between education for peace, memory recovery and historical education, to overcome the training in values and move towards the understanding of violence and the possibilities of non-repetition. This means articulating an ethical approach that puts the voices of the victims in the center, articulated to a critical, rigorous and plural understanding of the social conflict, its causes, actors and consequences (Bermudez et al., 2020).

In this sense, the cases show significant differences. In the case of the Basque Country, in the different education plans, it is observed that the study of the violent past and the recovery of memory for the delegitimization of violence is contemplated. With the publication of the Herenegun materials, it is evident that this work seeks to be done from historical education, giving a leading position to the voices of the victims. This is not the case in the case of Colombia, where, although general education guidelines for peace are observed and the context of political violence is recognized, educational orientation is made towards the promotion of interpersonal

skills for coexistence. While this is necessary for the construction of peace cultures (Bar-Tal, 2002), this approach is insufficient for contexts where the use of violence has marked recent history and due to its duration over time, it has normalized (Salomon, 2002).

- **Training and accompaniment of teachers**

In both cases of study, it is observed that today in the classrooms a traditional, encyclopedic and memoristic form of teaching history continues to be implemented, and that the approach of the history of recent political violence is a little debated in the classrooms. We have also seen that the subjective relationship with recent history makes the approach to the subject, as well as changes in focus and methodologies, complex and challenging. Hence, we consider the development of training and support strategies for social sciences teachers to be fundamental, so that they can acquire the pedagogical tools necessary for the development and implementation of narratives and dialogue and constructivist methodologies in the classroom that facilitate and promote the development of thinking and agency skills. Likewise, and specifically in the case of Colombia, it is necessary to ensure safe spaces so that the teachers can critically address the social and political reality of their territories, the causes and consequences of violence, as well as the possibilities for peace building.

- **Dialogue between formal and non-formal education**

It is also essential that there be dialogue between the school and other spaces of non-formal education such as museums, civic centers and civil society organizations that are part of the present and the everyday life of students, so that connections and contrasts can be established between the contents and reflections in the classroom and its social reality. It is also observed that addressing these topics outside of school and through alternative narrative methodologies and tools increases the interest of students, and can generate questions and reflections to be addressed later in the classroom (I, Momoitio, interview on October 6, 2021).

In the case of the experience of the Fundación Escuelas de Paz, it is observed how the educational processes surpass the school, they enter into dialogue with different actors in the community with perspectives and narratives that are included in the debate and research in the classroom.

- **Promotion of research from the bottom up for a placed knowledge**

We consider it important to support groups and research centers to generate new knowledge about strategies, narratives and methodologies that can strengthen the educational processes in the classroom. It is important that this knowledge arises from the local perspective and responds to the needs of the communities, hence these processes must be given from the bottom up. Such is the case of the CEA that issued suggestions and adjustments to the narratives of the educational material *Herenegun!* of the Basque Government considering that it was not representing the voices of the victims in their entirety (Jesús Prieto, interview on September 29, 2021). It also seems fundamental to us that research studies in-depth cases and uses a comparative perspective. That is to say that, despite the differences in context, one can learn from significant experiences from other countries that have gone through similar experiences. For example, the Memorialab initiative, which is not only inspired by other experiences in the Basque Country but also in other parts of the world such as Guatemala, Museum of Word and Image, El Salvador, Institute for Healing of Memories, South Africa and Towards understanding and healing of Northern Ireland.



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